

Then, in 1975, when the Lebanese civil war erupted, the divisions between Arab regimes became magnified in Lebanon, and they became real here in America. Although religion had very little to do with the Lebanese conflict, the Maronite church in America tried to make it so. It became a game of the Phalangist leadership in Lebanon to force people in this country to choose sides, resulting in a serious split in loyalties here, just as it resulted in a deadly split in Lebanon. The fact that the Phalangists were being supported by Israel made the divisions even more pronounced, and, in fact, deepened the crisis of identity being suffered by many in our community for the first time. Many of our community felt the need to continue to support the Palestinian cause, but withheld their support in part because of how the media began portraying Palestinians as terrorists, and in part because of the split engendered by the Phalangists. By this time, the media began labeling all Palestinians as terrorists. If you will recall the ugly editorial cartoons, the movie and television portrayals, among other things.

To further the attack on Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular, all Arabs were portrayed as either bandits or spendthrifts. The few rich Gulf Arabs who made the news became the standard image for Arabs of all stripes. The fact that most Arabs are poor, and live in an underdeveloped state meant nothing to the Zionists and their supporters. We thus became, in the eyes of the media, either undeservedly rich, or unrepentantly bomb throwers.

That split, and that identity crisis continued unabated for years. As a community, we began to change that in 1980, when the community put together ADC. Its specific purpose was to try to re-unite the entire Arab American community, and it succeeded, up to a point. As a community, we had some tremendous obstacles to surmount. The head of the Maronite church forbade its members from joining ADC, primarily because we refused to support the Phalangist cause in Lebanon. There were many people jealous of the rapid growth of ADC, resulting in a good deal of undercutting of its mission. I remember one Arab American who called me at ADC and told me that he was starting a local anti-discrimination group--it was here in California. I told him that would be great. Would he like to become a chapter of ADC? No, he said. He could do it much better alone. That attitude was part of the problem as well. There was more than one Arab American who, if they could not be in charge, refused to join in a united effort. There was more than one group formed because people could not bear the thought of not being the leader. Although we know that is a carry-over from the old country attitudes, it had some effect on us here.



Additionally, we had a great many in our community who feared the loss of their business if they took part in any political movements. This created a great many internal conflicts, resolved only by many Arab Americans refusing to take part in community political activities. It resulted in many of those dropping out altogether, amplifying their own identity crisis, forcing them to deny their heritage for fear of losing business because of it.

I went to Columbia, South Carolina, to organize a chapter of ADC, and was told by the community leader--an older Lebanese immigrant who had come to America in the 1930's--that in my speech to his group I should not bring up politics. But, I told him, that was the only message I had to deliver. He nervously disagreed, still trying to talk me out of anything political. The local Lebanese club that he headed had only a few older people as members, but on that day there were a great many fresh, young faces in the audience. Of course I gave them my organizing speech, sprinkled with liberal doses of anti-Israeli rhetoric, along with denunciations of the U.S. government's policy. At first, my host cringed. But later when he saw the enthusiastic reaction of the young people in the audience, the applause generated by the politics in my speech, he warmed to the task of having them join his Lebanese club. They did, along with forming an ADC chapter.

Our identity crisis has become, I'm sad to say, magnified by the signing of the agreement with Israel by Yasir Arafat. Amid the great desire for this conflict to come to an end came serious doubts about the efficacy of the agreement, especially when it came to any benefits for the Palestinian people as a whole. Our community was, and is, torn between a desire to get it all over with, and the recognition that in return for Yasir Arafat being crowned president of a non-existent Palestine, he gave it all away. It was as if using a sports analogy, someone blew a whistle in the middle of a play, and everyone just stopped, without finishing the play. Our community hoped for the best, but feared the worst. Because Arafat left all the important issues--that is, important to the Palestinian people--for later, he is, to use another analogy, left at the altar with a small bouquet of flowers, but with no arrous. The issues of Jerusalem, of settlements, of nationhood, all were left for later. Later is now here, and Netanyahu is not so anxious to step up to the altar with Arafat.

This is not so much an identity crisis, as a crisis of the spirit. Do we revert to our former persona as resisters of Israeli objectives? Or do we play along, hoping for the best?



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I think, that in search of our identities, that our benchmark be our principles--those same principles that most of us have stood upon from the beginning. I think it is beneficial to use as a symbol of how to find our identity, Edward Said. Despite criticism over the years from many different directions, Edward--and a great many of you here in this room--have stood firm on lasting principles. Edward never tried to determine what was good for him, personally. As a true intellectual, he made his decisions based on what was good for the people as a whole. His has been an exercise in advancing civilization, not only in Palestine, but in the world as a whole. He is someone who instills great pride in me, and who is a role model for all of us. He has no doubt about who he is and where he comes from. There are many more in our community like Edward who are firmly planted, who know who they are, and who have no crisis of identity.

But I've learned from bitter experience that if I begin to name them, I'm sure to forget someone, and the trouble begins.

And we have symbols of just the opposite. . . of those who establish their principles on shifting sands, who never quit searching for an identity that will suit them.

He is someone whose religion is opportunism, whose politics is opportunism, and whose philosophy is opportunism.

He allies himself with Zionists, then complains only mildly when his allies bomb civilians in South Lebanon.

He endorses the Arafat agreement with Israel before he knows whether or not the Palestinians--those who are most affected by it--will respond. And he does so because his Zionist sponsors in the White House demand such an endorsement.

The task given him in return for his entree into the White House under Clinton is to deliver the Arab American community into the arms of the Zionists. His reward is, apparently, an unlimited number of photo opportunities in the White House. But you will notice, that there has not been one scintilla of change of policy that has accompanied that access.

Biblically, Judas Iscariot was the man who betrayed Jesus. In more modern times, farmers have placed what is known as a "Judas goat" to entice other animals to come into their trap.

Our community, in an effort to define ourselves, must be wary of Judas goats placed in our midst in an effort to end our reliance on our principles. We must stand firm, and we must fight smart. And we must be able to know the difference between principle and opportunism. Only then will our own identities take shape.

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The PROGRESSIVE MEDIA PROJECT

September 23, 2002

My visit to Iraq

By former Sen. James Abourezk

I recently traveled to Iraq, and as I saw Iraqi civilians on the streets of Baghdad, I could think only of what percentage of these innocents would be lying dead after a war started by President Bush.

There is little question that the U.S. military would be able to crush Iraq in a few short days -- the world's largest superpower against a poorly defended Third World country. But in Bush's quest of domination of Saddam Hussein, how many thousands of Iraqi civilians will fall victim to the high-tech slaughter of "smart bombs" and other weapons of real mass destruction delivered by the U.S. military?

We saw small children in the cancer ward of the Baghdad children's hospital doomed to an early death because of the lack of medicine. That medicine has been blocked by the American and British delegates to a review committee that is charged with monitoring imports into Iraq for the food-for-oil program. We learned from human-rights organizations that one in 10 Iraqi children die before their first birthday, and one in three of these children suffer from malnutrition.

Rep. Nick Rahall, D-W.V., and I traveled together. We impressed upon Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz that Bush was absolutely serious, that he wanted a war and that allowing weapons inspectors into Iraq would remove his reasons for invading. Although Aziz seemed a bit negative in responding to us, two days later his government announced that inspectors could come in without conditions.

That announcement perhaps slowed, but did not stop, Bush's drive to start a war. He is pushing hard on a compliant pre-election Congress for a resolution allowing him to declare war whenever and however he sees fit. This is all unprecedented in American history. We have had minor "incursions" before, in Panama and Grenada, but never has the Congress written a blank war check allowing a president to fill in the blanks at his pleasure and upon his whim.

Senior adviser to the president Karl Rove has told Republican activists that the Republicans cannot win elections based on the economy and on corporate scandals. But they can win, in his words, on a war platform, which perhaps explains why, when Bush at first said weapons inspectors must be allowed into Iraq, he changed his mind and began demanding more concessions when

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the Iraqis agreed to allow the inspectors in.

The Bush administration is using scare tactics. Iraq, despite the insane policies of the Saddam Hussein regime, has no bombers or long-range missiles that could deliver weapons of mass destruction. And there is no real connection between the fundamentalist al-Qaida and secular Iraq. No one has yet presented credible evidence of a connection between the two.

An attack on Iraq by Bush would destroy the foundations on which the U.N. Charter rests. Should India decide to attack Pakistan, or should China decide to attack Taiwan, or should Russia choose to invade Georgia because of the rebellion in Chechnya, America will be stripped of moral standing to object to such aggression. We will have, in fact, set a new, dangerous precedent in an already dangerous world -- that one nation can with force change any regime of another nation it doesn't like. What Bush and his warhawks are proposing is to destroy the basic underlying principle of the United Nations -- that there shall be no more aggressive wars between nations.

Those members of Congress who vote to give Bush an OK to start a war will also have a great deal of explaining to do when the American economy goes into the tank because of high oil prices and the high cost of the war, and when American soldiers begin coming home in body bags. The costs will not end there, but will continue for years as America tries to establish a new government from the fractious entities now existing in Iraq. Further, if Bush is serious about the war on terrorism, the invasion he is angling for will certainly destroy any coalition with Arab countries that are helping us fight that war.

My hope is that there will be enough opposition to this war to stop it before it starts. If Bush is not willing to listen, then perhaps the Democrats in Congress, who, up till now, jump when they see their own shadows, will try to derail the war train before they, and we, are sorry.

James Abourezk represented South Dakota in the U.S. Senate from 1973 to 1979 and in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1971 to 1973. He's the author of "Advise & Dissent: Memoirs of South Dakota and the U.S. Senate" (Lawrence Hill Books, 1989) and "Through Different Eyes" (Adler & Adler, 1987), a book debating issues in the Middle East. He can be reached at pmproj@progressive.org.

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ISBN: 0-940880-69-5 / 0940880695

Title: Imperial Washington: The Story of American Public Life from 1870 to 1920

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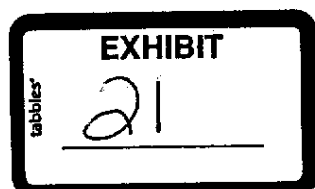


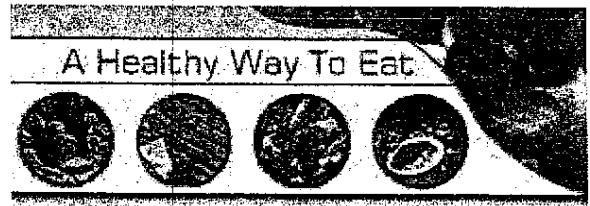
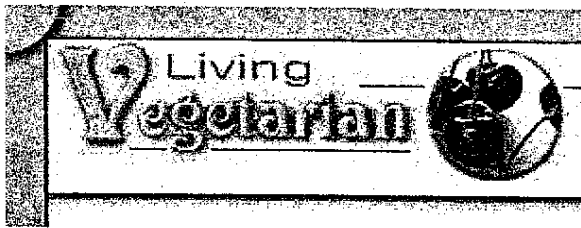
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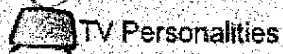
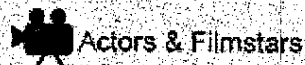
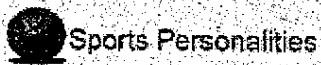
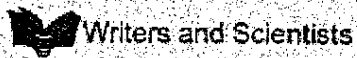
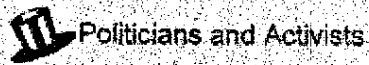
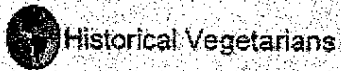
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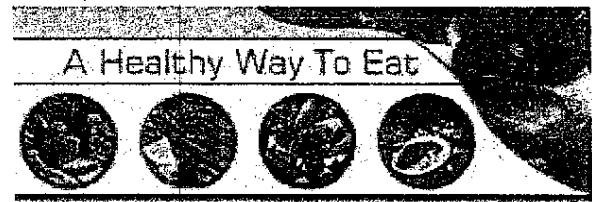
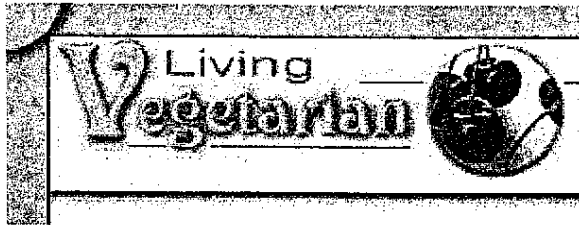
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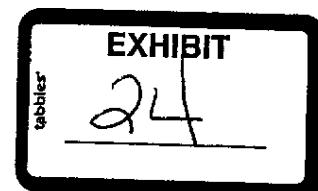
I'll Hold My Nose With One Hand and Vote For Clinton With the Other

By Former Sen. James G. Abourezk

People have tried to convince me that, as president, Bob Dole would be better on the Middle East issue. I know that Dole has demonstrated more than once that he doesn't like what Israel is doing. And I know that Bill Clinton has demonstrated that he has an open request line for Israel's wants and needs. With him, it's no holds barred so far as Israel is concerned. Whatever Israel wants, Israel gets, with no argument and no delay. Clinton has only one principle – get elected, no matter who it hurts or who it helps.

But, despite Dole's private views on Israel, with him, that's as far as it goes. No matter how much lip service he might pay in criticizing Israel's actions, he inevitably caves in at the end to give Israel what it wants. As president, he would be even more vulnerable to Israeli lobby pressure, because then he would have not only his entire political party, but also the Republicans (and Democrats) in the Congress leaning on him to do Israel's bidding. Not since Eisenhower has a president had the courage to face down the Israeli lobby. That was in 1956 and that was Ike. Today the lobby is much more sophisticated and much more organized than it was in those days. In the words of Lloyd Bentsen, "I know Bob Dole, and he's no Dwight Eisenhower."

I actually did know Dole when I served in the U.S. Senate with him. He was always up-front and straightforward. He had no hidden agenda. He was not the Republican leader back then, but he was a respected conservative senator whose word was always good. I will never forget when the Senate Republicans were on the verge of destroying the food stamp program. Dole convinced enough of them to support it, and indeed it was saved. He's been backsliding a bit lately, what with the fealty he's been forced to pay to the tobacco lobby, however. Clinton, on the other hand, has demonstrated his ability to buckle under any kind of political pressure. As someone once said, he's like a huge cushion. He bears the impression of whomever sat on him last. While Dole might be able to withstand pressure until the end, only to eventually cave in, Clinton comes into a fight looking around for someone to surrender to. Witness the health care campaign when he was first elected. His opening – keeping health insurance companies in the game – was a compromise, when the problem all along with health care has been the health insurance companies. There is nothing wrong with our medical technology, or the competence of doctors and hospitals. There is something wrong, however, in how health



care is financed, and his compromise would not have changed that at all. But as you might suspect, when you come to the bargaining table with a compromise already in place, the game is over before it starts.

Moreover, Clinton has backed away from his friends, such as Lani Guinier, and Jocelyn Elders, the former surgeon general, and other appointments he's made, or that he's not made, as the case may be. At the first hint of controversy, he's gone, disappearing into the darkness, leaving those who supported him to be devoured by the political wolves. Watching him campaign this year, one wonders if he ever had a firm belief in anything. The Republicans are furious as they watch him, every day, steal their issues.

As a Democrat, I like comedian Jackie Mason's philosophy. If I wanted to vote for a Republican, I can do so directly. I don't need a middle man. Someone else has commented that there's no need to elect a Republican president this year, because we already have one in the White House. And Clinton can't wait to do things for Israel, even appointing a working Zionist – Martin Indyk – first as his White House Middle East specialist, then as ambassador to Israel. And his virtual endorsement of the Israeli shelling of Qana was shameful.

But on the Arab-Israeli conflict, I'm confident that there will not be one speck of difference between Clinton and Dole. I believe that both always will do what Israel wants. They both will provide whatever money Israel needs to continue its war against the Arabs – at least those Arabs who haven't yet surrendered – and both will continue uninterrupted the flow of weapons to Israel to prevent it from being forced by reality to make any kind of fair deal with its Arab neighbors.

If I thought there would be a hope of a change of policy from Bob Dole, I honestly would reconsider my position tomorrow. But I've watched too many presidents come into power with the initial desire to rein in Israel, only to end up serving Israel.

Every presidential election year, I hear from my friends that a Republican president would be tough on Israel. What about such a dream? Well, Republican Ronald Reagan did more for Israel than any president before him. (Clinton is competing hard.) But even George Bush the oil man, and the fabled Jim Baker, did almost no damage to Israel's objectives while they were running things. I admit to having a lot of things wrong with me, but amnesia is not one of them. No, Virginia, there is not one speck of difference in the political party of the president when it comes to the Middle East, and perhaps in many other areas as well.

What is wrong with the political parties vis-a-vis the Arab Israeli conflict is more a reflection on the Arab-American community, however, than on the politicians. How did it come about that both Democrats and Republicans bow and scrape to Israel? It is because the Zionists years ago were able to unite all their many factions and act as one when it came to getting support for Israel. There is no shortage of money for candidates who support Israel, because Israel's supporters, mostly American Jews, open their pocketbooks when pro-Israeli organizations come around raising money. What happens when pro-Arab organizations, such as the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, and American Educational Trust, ask for money? It's easier to pull teeth. Those who do have money to give would rather spend it on something else – anything else – rather than form a common cause against the Zionists. I know. I spent 15 years trying to raise something more than a drop of money for ADC in order to organize the Arab-American community. Uniting – that's just something the community apparently doesn't want done.

So what about other issues? For me, it comes down to whom the respective candidates will bring with them to the government if elected. For all his wishy-washy vacillating and his finger-in-the-wind posturing, Clinton has and will continue to appoint a few people in his administration who will have some semblance of humanity about them.

The big difference to American Indians here in South Dakota are the federal judges Clinton has appointed. Actually, they are judges recommended by our Democratic senator, Tom Daschle, but named by Clinton. The two he has appointed so far are humane, fair, scholarly, and able to make courageous decisions against the grain if they believe they are right. Already they have made a world of difference for Indian tribes in South Dakota, who for years have been getting the short end of the stick from Reagan and Bush appointees. I suspect that if someone did a study of the quality of federal judges appointed by Clinton around the country, the result would not be much different.

Make no mistake. I have absolutely no use for what has passed for the Democratic Party in the past few years. Democratic members of Congress have grown fat and sassy, and, in fact, have been acting just like Republicans – cozying up to the big money interests and forgetting about their less fortunate constituents. They deserved to be swept out of office in 1994. And unless they've learned their lesson, they'll be swept out again. The only thing that saves them now is the unmitigated greed of the class of Republican freshmen, and their leaders, who seem to want to serve everyone but the public.

I've been urged by friends to support Ralph Nader's protest run for the presidency this year. The theory is that Ralph will pull Clinton over to his point of view politically. It's a protest against Clinton's rightward shift, against him running as a Republican, but from the Democratic Party. My view is that Ralph Nader is one of America's greatest citizens. He's someone I've admired from the beginning of his career. In fact, if Ralph ever ran a campaign for the presidency that is something more than just a protest campaign, I would give up my law practice and work for him full time.

He is perhaps the most honest, gifted, and intelligent person in or out of politics in America. But such a protest vote for any third party candidate would only ensure that even more Republican hordes would descend on Washington to finish the work Newt Gingrich started – the work of dismantling America's social programs – programs that keep poor people alive, that keep the poor from rioting in the streets, and that keep children from openly begging on the streets.

I feel downright angry about the Clinton White House calling the FBI in every time they want to do something to some of their political enemies. There's no question in my mind that the recent brouhaha about the FBI files in the White House was the Clinton campaign's preparation for an enemies list. That makes Clinton himself even more distasteful to me. Clinton and his people have proved they can be mean and heavy-handed.

But when I look at who will come into prominence and influence should Dole be elected, I really fear for the country. Look what the Republican crazies in power have done in the past two years without a Republican president in office. What will they do if there is one of their own party in the White House signing their mean-spirited legislation? Sen. Alphonse D'Amato, Newt Gingrich, Dick Arney. These will all be running the country if a Republican comes to the White House.

The Republicans who want to slowly strangle Medicare and Medicaid; those who want to gut the environmental programs laboriously put in place in the last 25 years; those who want to make certain the rich are taken care of; and those who, at the same time, want to throw millions of children off welfare, and close down the Women, Infants and Children's program; they will have the whip hand, and there would not be anyone to stop them. There is not one iota of humanity in any of them. They are there to serve the wealthy and that's that.

Bob Dole would not only go along with Israel's objectives, but he would swallow the pills being fed to him by Gingrich and

Company. Rich Americans should never vote for anyone but a Republican president. But the rest of us would be crazy to bring into total power the Rush Limbaughs, the Newt Gingriches, and the others who believe in economic royalism. Have we so quickly forgotten how the Republican Congress wants to treat immigrants, both legal and illegal? Can we forget that most of us in the Arab-American community either are immigrants or the children of immigrants?

And, not least, I'm absolutely disgusted at the way the Republicans have tried to destroy Hillary Clinton. Apparently, because nothing sticks to Clinton himself, they have aimed their fire at his wife. I'm convinced they believe that a woman who is intelligent and independent is a threat to all manhood, and the Republican attacks on her are designed to appeal to that segment of our society – those who fear that women might do some thinking on their own. But to me it is a disgusting way to practice politics.

Perhaps I'm thinking back to when I was in office. Try as they might back then, the Zionists could find no dirt on me, so they resorted to attacking my children in order to get at me. What Alphonse D'Amato and Newt Gingrich and the rest of the hatchet men in the Republican Party are doing with their smear campaign is attempting to help themselves, but they're not helping America. That kind of studied meanness goes hand in hand with the stupid ham-handedness exhibited by some of the heavies in the Clinton White House – those who called the FBI in on the travel office business, and those who collected the FBI files on political opponents.

If it is a choice between Clinton's opportunism and Dole's cronyism – a distasteful choice – I must opt for the more humane group of people being in power, as we more and more often are forced to say, "the lesser of the two evils."

This election year, for the reasons I've cited, I will hold my nose with one hand and vote for Clinton with the other.

Sen. James G. Abourezk, who served in both the House and the Senate as a Democrat from South Dakota, was a founder of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in 1980. He practices law in Sioux Falls, SD.

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NATIONAL NEWS

Veterans' Administration benefits counselor in Chicago, began noticing a similarity in the backgrounds of veterans coming to her office to file health claims. "The only thing these people had in common was that they were in Vietnam within a certain period of time."

De Victor logged more than 50 cases of dioxyn poisoning symptoms before her supervisor ordered her to stop. Then she broke the story to the press.

The response was clear. A TV documentary aired by WBBM in Chicago resulted in more than 800 veterans contacting the Veterans' Administration or veterans counseling groups in an effort to file claims. There has been a similar, if slower, reaction nationwide.

But although the veterans are convinced of the problem, the Veterans' Administration is not. In fact, the V.A. has been anything but cooperative about the dioxyn poisoning claims. In April, it issued a directive instructing all offices to demand specific symptoms, dates of exposure and other information from veterans. According to the memo, "Mere exposure itself is not a disease or a disability." The V.A. also stated that there was no provision for claims of genetic damage to veterans' children.

"The long-term effect of Agent Orange has never been medically verified," a V.A. spokesperson said, adding that its toxicity is "no higher than aspirin." He also called the World Health Organization's report, "North Vietnamese propaganda."

Many veterans groups like the New York-based Citizen Soldier as well as environmental organizations are calling the V.A.'s bluff and beginning a massive expose campaign. Its effect, moreover, could go far beyond the V.A. Dioxyn is sprayed over five million acres of national forest land in the United States and it can be found in commercial weed killers. Several people have reported dioxyn poisoning symptoms in Oregon, Minnesota and Wisconsin after 2,4,5-T was sprayed.

Despite the evidence against Agent Orange, its manufacturer, Dow Chemical, is carrying on production with little interference. In its harshest action to date, the Environmental Protection Agency put 2,4,5-T on a list of suspect chemicals in April. But this is merely the first step in a long bureaucratic procedure that gives the manufacturer a chance to rebut the charges.

Dow, which also produced napalm, has engaged in an extensive public relations campaign for 2,4,5-T, claiming that the herbicide is "harmless". □

A Talk with the "Lonely Man"



South Dakota's Abourezk: the Senate's "loneliest man".

BY SHELDON SUNNESS

"The loneliest man in the Senate," was the way a Washington journalist once described Senator James Abourezk. Lonely, perhaps, but not bored nor boring. In fact, the junior Senator from South Dakota has been in the middle of virtually every major controversy involving the Senate and the Carter Administration this year. A member of the Senate-House Conference Committee on Energy, he was a harsh critic of Administration and energy-company policies. As a member of the Sub-Committee on Indian Affairs, he has supported the self-determination and land rights of Native Americans. From his position on the Judiciary Committee, he has been critical of the Supreme Court and, from the floor of the Senate, Jim Abourezk has become the major Congressional supporter of Palestinian self-determination.

After one term in the Senate, Abourezk

has announced he will not seek re-election. That fact and the important role he plays as critic in major debates in Congress today convinced us that we should have a talk with the Senator. Sheldon Sunness sat down with Abourezk in Washington in May for a conversation on energy policy, inflation and foreign policy. Here are the highlights of that interview.

The Carter Administration has begun to say that inflation has replaced unemployment as the most important issue in the country today. What do you think?

Presidential advisor Robert Strauss, who spends all this time fighting inflation on behalf of the President, doesn't have the slightest care about the inflation caused by gas and oil prices. They talk

Sheldon Sunness is a New York free-lance writer who also works as a bartender —as Senator Abourezk once did.

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about inflation caused by the postal workers, the farmers and the coal miners. What about the oil and gas companies? You don't hear one word. No, they help the companies.

Doesn't it also take the thrust off unemployment as an issue?

They'd be happy to do that because then they don't have to worry about putting people to work.

As a Presidential candidate, Jimmy Carter spoke a lot about tax reform. But as President, he offered little and delivered even less. Has he failed or has he run into a stone wall in Congress?

It's both. You get stonewalled in Congress a lot, but a President can overcome that because he has a lot of clout with the public. If Carter expended as much energy on tax reform as he did on this lousy energy stinker of his, he'd have some good tax reform. Right now, there are 67 co-sponsors to repeal the capital gains tax. Do you believe that?

But doesn't that fact support the argument that no President could get real tax reform through the Congress?

But what if the President went on T.V. and made a "sky-is-falling" speech on capital gains, just like he did on energy?

Exactly, he did make that energy speech and a year later he still hasn't got his energy bill passed.

But he came up with a lousy program. That's why he's had no success. If he had left natural gas deregulation out of his package, it would have passed long ago. In fact, the only reason 90 percent of his program hasn't passed now is because he's asked [House Speaker] Tip O'Neill to hold it up and use it as a lever to pass natural gas deregulation.

What should the energy program be, besides omitting natural gas deregulation?

First, I believe there ought to be mandatory conservation, not conservation through higher prices. It's unfair not to have alternative means of transportation, to hook everyone in their autos and then, in effect, to pull the rug out from under by saying that we must now pay three to four times as much for fuel.

Next, widely expanded use of solar energy, by simple means, not these gigantic research programs. I've proposed to give people a long-term, low-cost loan to buy solar energy components. That would create a mass market and make the equipment available more cheaply. Right now people can't afford the initial cost.

And there's no government agency right now, especially not the Department of Energy, providing people with information about simple solar devices they could build for practically nothing.

You've been very critical of the oil and gas companies, calling them the "snake oil salesmen of the 70s." You've argued that they're in collusion with the government, currently perpetrating a "collective rape of the American consumer of a magnitude unknown in our history." How do you get these companies out of the government?

Public financing of the Congressional races is the first step. Then, you try to determine oil policy based on the national interest, not the interest of oil companies. They come up with this nonsense: "If you don't pay us our price, we're not going to produce." My response is if they don't produce, nationalize them. I've always said that. You ought to begin with the concept that a private company can produce oil if it wants to at a fair price and an adequate profit. But if the companies won't do it—and they want exorbitant profits—to hell with them. They have no right to disrupt the economy and make people suffer and go without food. There are people in South Dakota, old people, who must make a choice between heating their houses in winter time and eating. They just don't have enough money to pay for both.

Have people just accepted all this?

The public hasn't accepted it but they feel there's nothing they can do about it. They feel the die is cast and the President is against them, the Congress is against them, the oil companies and the banks, that they're all in on it together. The public smells that and they're right actually.

You're regarded as a very vocal critic of U.S. Middle East policy. What do you consider a fair and just Middle East settlement?

I think, first, a homeland for the Palestinians, a state. That was the heart of the problem from the beginning and it must end with that.

Can that homeland be carved out of the West Bank, out of Jordan?

Yes, the Palestinians have indicated that that's what they're willing to accept. At this time, it's a matter of reality for them.

So it wouldn't have to come out of any of the borders that now comprise Israel?

The Palestinian state could come out of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. How do you know what the borders of Israel are? They don't know. You know, that's the only country in the world that doesn't have any record of its borders.

How about resolving other issues like the Golan Heights or the Sinai Desert?

Well, that's very easy. It's mainly a question of establishing a state for the Palestinians—it's not that hard to do. Up until 1967, the Palestinians wanted the original land from which they'd been driven out. Then they found out that was unrealistic and began talking about the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

What do you think of the Carter Administration's overall Middle East policy?

I worry about Carter's commitment to a Palestinian state. He began by saying it should exist but now [National Security Advisor Zbigniew] Brzezinski is dismissing the P.L.O. out of hand. I wonder whether they're not attempting to cook up some deal with Sadat to knock the Palestinians out of the equation.

You've often said that our policy has been paralyzed by the Israeli lobby. But, in fact, there are several influential Americans [former Senator] William Fulbright, Bert Lance, Spiro Agnew and Clark Clifford—whom columnist Jack Anderson called the lobbyist of lobbyists—registered as lobbyists on the Arab countries' payrolls. Don't you think that cuts into the influence of the Israeli lobby?

Well, no. Whether those people are on the payroll of Arab countries doesn't mean a thing. What matters is, first, are they lobbying and, second, are they effective in their cause? I've never seen Bill Fulbright lobbying up here on the Hill. . . .

The only time I saw Clark Clifford talk about the Middle East was on a CBS news program, when he said that Harry Truman supported Israel in 1948 out of conscience and not under pressure of Jewish voters. . . . Most of these people are business lawyers, corporation people who represent a government in its foreign business dealings. They're called lobbyists not because they lobby but simply because they register as foreign agents as our laws require.

Beyond that, looking only at foreign agents overlooks the fact that many domestic lobbies—like B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and the Zionist Organization of America—lobby for the Israeli cause, even though they're not registered as foreign agents. □

ADVISE & *DISSENT*

*Memoirs of
South Dakota
and the U.S. Senate*

JAMES G. ABOUREZK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Abourezk, James.

Advise and dissent : memoirs of South Dakota and the U.S. Senate /
James G. Abourezk. — 1st ed.

p. cm.

ISBN 1-55652-066-2

1. Abourezk, James. 2. Legislators—United States—Biography.
3. United States. Congress. Senate—Biography. 4. South Dakota—
Politics and government. I. Title.

E840.8.A19A3 1989

328.73'092—dc20

89-15354

CIP

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Printed in the United States of America

First edition

First printing

Published by Lawrence Hill Books

An imprint of Chicago Review Press, Inc.

814 North Franklin Street

Chicago, Illinois 60610

ISBN 1-55652-066-2

senators who opposed both the filibuster and my position on natural gas were angered, rising to denounce the actions of Byrd and Mondale. To them it was a question of principle. They saw a threat to the system of fairness on which Senate procedure is based. Then, in the midst of the pandemonium something both strange and funny happened.

Majority Leader Byrd asked for recognition from the chair, and was advised that he had already used the hour allotted to him. In order to speak further he had to get the unanimous consent of the Senate, a request that was ordinarily granted. But when he made the request, Senator John Culver objected. Suddenly Byrd spun around and loosed all of his pent-up anger directly at Culver. He said nothing about either Metzenbaum or me, who had been the burrs under his saddle for the thirteen-day filibuster, but, looking straight at Culver, he spoke passionately about all the times he had "carried the spear" for the liberals, expressing total resentment at the mistreatment now being meted out to him by those he had helped. Then he broke into tears, a spontaneous act that succeeded, unwittingly, in bringing temporary quiet to the Senate floor.

After a time, I rose, got recognition, and called Jimmy Carter a liar. What I actually said was that during my entire adult life I knew that governments lied, but I had never thought that Jimmy Carter would lie. I was playing on one of the themes of Carter's campaign for the presidency in 1976, when he repeatedly vowed that he would never tell a lie to the American people. Senator Jim Allen walked over to me, and demanded—privately—that I apologize to the president. I told him that I refused to do so until the president first apologized for stabbing me in the back. Then Allen returned to his own desk in order to try to get everyone to calm down. He got recognition, and then began addressing the tactics used by Mondale and Byrd, in response to those senators who were complaining about them. "The steamroller you complain of," he said, "is nothing like the steamrollers in the past. I can bear witness to this from my flattened out body."

Then he pointed in my direction and said, "I observe the distinguished senator and note that his body has not yet been flattened by the steamroller."

Everyone then began shouting for recognition, including me. Somehow I was recognized. It seemed to me a perfect opening to continue Allen's effort to break the tension that hung over the Senate like an unwanted cloud of Los Angeles smog. Not only were the senators emotionally tired from thirteen days of virtually

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nonstop filibustering by amendment, but they were physically exhausted, making them more grouchy than usual. So I said, "I rise on a point of personal privilege because the shape of my body has been impugned."

No one expected to hear any levity at that point, which I guess made it all the more effective in breaking the tension. "I cannot help it if I'm fat, and I wish that the senator from Alabama would somehow recognize that fact."

More from relief than from a line that was not all that funny, the entire Senate broke out in sustained laughter.

A few minutes later I called together the small band of Democratic senators who had supported the filibuster, asking for advice on our next move. Surprisingly, we still had at our disposal more than 300 of the original 508 amendments that we had introduced at the beginning of the filibuster. With that many amendments it was possible to keep the filibuster going for the rest of the year, but because Carter was no longer even pretending to switch votes, there seemed to be no advantage in doing so.

Ted Kennedy pulled me off to the side and suggested that we end the filibuster, but that we put the blame for the whole affair at Carter's feet. (Kennedy was undoubtedly laying the groundwork for his primary challenge against Carter in 1980.) Given our anger at Carter and Mondale for what we saw as their treachery, it seemed like a reasonable thing to do. So Metzenbaum and I called a quick press conference at which we described what had happened.

A week or so later, after tempers had cooled, Carter invited Metzenbaum and me to the White House for what he called a "discussion." The only reference that he made to the filibuster was a brief, casual comment to the effect that we had handled the whole matter rather well. I took that as the only way he knew how to apologize for his double-dealing. The only comment that he would give the press after the affair ended was that he was not responsible for the filibuster.

Our filibuster ended in late 1977. At the beginning of 1978, the House-Senate Conference Committee was unable to iron out the differences between the two gas deregulation bills they were working on. Metzenbaum and I were members of the Conference Committee and we compounded the difficulty by using every opportunity to prevent agreement by the committee members. The Carter-Schlesinger response to the committee's failure to produce a unified bill was to cut a deal with Republicans on the committee and those Democrats who supported deregulation. To that end they invited

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Day Fund Raiser in Denver. At that point in my political career—I had already announced that I wouldn't run again—I was making a concerted effort to spend more time at home with my family. I protested—slightly—then agreed to go, saying that I would bring my wife with me.

But on Monday night, five days before the dinner was scheduled, the arrangements committee for the affair held a meeting to which the Denver press was invited. Apparently this committee had no authority over the choice of speaker, that being the province of the state Democratic party chairman, Monte Pascoe. But this little detail in no way deterred the arrangements committee, which proceeded to consider a motion to "disinvite Abourezk," on the grounds that he was not sufficiently pro-Israel.

Totally unsuspecting, I was called Tuesday morning by some of the Denver press, who obviously smelled a good story coming on, asking for my reaction to the committee meeting.

"My reaction . . . my reaction?" I repeated, trying to think of something to say. "Well, I can see that there are some supporters of Israel out there. Now let's see if anybody in Denver supports the right of free speech."

The press now had a certified controversy—one that bubbled along on the front pages for the rest of the week. Arnie Zaler, the head of the Denver chapter of the Zionist Organization of America, told a reporter that since the Democratic platform called for support of Israel, I should not be allowed to speak, because I did not obey the platform.

When I arrived in Denver on Friday, I announced to an airport press conference that, although I had taken an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution did not require me to swear allegiance to the State of Israel.

By then the Denver newspapers and television stations were editorializing in my favor and against the efforts to cancel my appearance. But even though that was no longer the issue—Arnie Zaler apparently saw his position slipping and on Wednesday had told the press that he was in favor of ending the confrontation—I was angry enough that I continued to attack both the arrangements committee and the Zionist Organization of America, Denver chapter.

By the time Saturday rolled around, immense amounts of publicity had doubled the anticipated size of the crowd for the dinner, and "Abourezk" had become a household word in Denver. Most amusing was the total discomfort that the controversy was causing